

**Emotions/Feelings:** Participants identify emotions; participants examine the role emotions and feelings play in their lives; participants practice healthy coping skills.

Lesson plans:

- 1) Emotions
- 2) Crinkle Heart
- 3) Stress balloon

Lesson: Emotions (adapted from Vangie Akridge and My Community Huddle, Inc.)

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION:** What is a feeling or emotion?

**OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS:** Participants identify emotions; participants describe their own feelings; participants act out emotions.

**SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE:** Emotions or feelings are complex psychological and physiological **reactions involving a person's state of mind and their surrounding environment.** Emotions include feeling angry, jealous, happy, sad, scared, guilty, grief, joy, trust, nervous, annoyed, shy, envious, desirous, disappointed, worried, furious, proud, regretful. People often feel more than **one emotion at a time and there are often multiple causes for someone's emotional state.** Emotions, feeling them, expressing them, or not expressing them, influence behaviors and actions; it is imperative to learn how to cope with emotions and how to express emotions in productive and positive ways so our actions can be aligned with how we wish to behave.

**MATERIALS:**

- Tables or areas labeled according to age group
- Journals
- Pens or pencils
- Large posted list of emotions

**LENGTH OF LESSON:** 45 minutes to 1 hour

**PROCEDURE:**

1. Participants sign in as they enter the room and sit at tables according to their age group. Have a volunteer or teacher sit at each table.
2. Introduce the topic by saying that today we will be talking about things that go on inside of our bodies, some things we can see and some things we cannot see.
3. Ask the group to think about their bodies. Ask the group to raise their hands and say some body parts that can move (examples: arms, legs, eyes, mouth).
4. Explain there are some things that go on in our bodies that make us human that we cannot move or see. Ask for examples from the group (ex: problems, feelings, emotions).
5. Ask the group, **“what is a feeling or an emotion?” Ask the group to give some definitions.** Explain what a feeling or an emotion is and give some examples.
6. Within the small groups at their table, have each student describe one feeling they had today. The volunteer or teacher at the table can further guide the students to describe another

feeling they had that day, a feeling they had on another day, or ask why they felt that way (this is where it is suitable to direct the conversation based on age appropriateness).

7. After having shared at their small groups, have the students share with the whole group some feelings that came up in their small group.

8. Have the girls volunteer to silently act out an emotion one at a time in front of the whole group. Have the group guess what emotion is being acted out.

9. Have the girl stand in a line from shortest to tallest, facing the back of the person who is standing in front of them. Have the participants put their right hand on the shoulder of the person in front of them. Have them keep their hand on the shoulder and stretch out the line so that their arm is almost straight so that they have enough room to move.

10. Explain that for this activity, when a scenario is described that makes you feel good, stay **standing up. When a scenario is described that doesn't make you feel good, squat down.**

Explain that there is an in between, that they can squat slightly if they don't **feel all the way** good or all the way not good, as emotions are rarely completely good or completely bad. State various scenarios and have the girls react. Do about 10 scenarios. Sample scenarios: How do you feel when you get a good grade on a test and the teacher tells you that you did a good job? **How do you feel when you don't get a good grade on a test? How do you feel when your best friend doesn't want to play with you at recess? How do you feel when you don't get to spend the night at a friend's house?** How do you feel when you get to eat your favorite meal for dinner? How do you feel when your sister or brother gets to go somewhere that you want to go **and you don't get to go? How do you feel when you win the talent show? How do you feel when you don't win the talent show?** How do you feel when you get to pick what movie you and your friends will watch?

11. Explain that as they could see from this activity, we all have ups and downs and that we should treat each other as sisters.

12. Have participants turn to a neighbor in the line and tell them how they are feeling right now. Direct participants to say the motto of Girls Only to their neighbor.

13. Remind participants that emotions are an important part of life and are what make us human! Ask the participants to think about their emotions throughout the next week and notice what different emotions they have.

JOURNAL PROMPT: What is your favorite feeling to have? When was the last time you had that feeling and what made you feel like that? What is your least favorite feeling to have? When has how you felt about something influenced how you acted?

EVALUATION: Were the participants able to identify various emotions? Were the participants engaged and participating in the discussion and activities in the lesson?

**RELATED ACTIVITIES:** Participants can keep a "feelings journal" and track their emotions throughout the week.

Lesson: Crinkle Heart (adapted from Youthlight Inc. training, "Mean Girls- Strategies and Resources in Identifying and Helping Relationally Aggressive Girls and Empowering Their Victims")

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: How powerful are words?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants build empathy and demonstrate the power of words (both positive and negative).

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Words are powerful. Teasing, bullying, cattiness, name calling, gossiping, and discriminatory language can lead to depression, low self-esteem, drug and alcohol abuse, and even suicide. Similarly, compliments and kind language can build self-esteem and boost confidence. Teaching young people to use alternatives to language that hurts others and use language they are proud of helps facilitate effective communication and can help them avoid conflict.

MATERIALS:

- Large paper cut-out of a heart
- Paper heart cut-outs for each participant

LENGTH OF LESSON: 20 minutes

PROCEDURE:

1. **Begin by asking the participants to raise their hands if they've** ever had their feelings hurt by something someone said. Notice that most of us have had our feelings hurt by words.
2. **Ask them to raise their hands if they have ever hurt someone's feelings using words.**
3. Explain that this activity is going to show how powerful words are—they can make someone feel really great or really terrible.
4. Show the large paper cut-out heart. Pass out a paper heart cut-out for each participant. Explain that this is a symbol of our own heart.
5. **Explain that we're going to talk** about words and actions that hurt us and make our hearts hurt. Give direction that for each word or action that makes us feel bad, crumple the heart a little bit.
6. Ask for examples of words or actions that hurt (ex: someone calls you stupid, ugly, other **examples of calling names, someone tells you that you aren't good at something, someone leaves you out, silent treatment, etc**). For each negative thing, crumple up the shape a little more.
7. Ask the participants to explain what they notice about the heart. What effect did all of those mean words have on your heart? Remind them no one likes to feel sad or angry or hurt, just like **they don't**.
8. **Now explain we're going to talk about words and actions that make us feel nice and make** our hearts feel better. Give direction that for each word or action that makes us feel good, un-crumple the heart a little bit.

9. Ask for examples of words or actions that feel nice (ex: someone tells you they like you, someone tells you they think you look nice today, kind words, compliments, making new friends, being included with others, working out problems kindly, etc). For each positive thing, smooth out the shape a little more.
10. Ask the participants to explain what they notice about the heart now. What effect did the kind words have on your heart? Remind them everyone deserves to feel happy, confident and good about themselves, just like they do.
11. Show that when the shape is unfolded, there are still wrinkles. Cruel words and acts remain inside a person for a long time. Ask the participants to remember the power of their words **before they say something that might hurt someone else's feelings or the next time** they hear a mean name being called.
12. **Ask the participants to go around the room and say one thing they'll remember from this activity.**
13. Students can tape or glue their crinkled hearts into their journals or take them home to remember the lasting power of words. The large heart can be hung in the front of the room as a visual reminder of the power of words.

JOURNAL PROMPT: Have you ever heard a joke that made someone else feel bad because of the words used? Write down the joke and explain why it would hurt their feelings. Is there a word you use that makes someone or a group of people feel bad? What is the word and what word or words could you use instead?

EVALUATION: Did the participants identify words that cause hurt feelings? Did they identify words that make them feel good? Did they crinkle the heart and un-crinkle it at appropriate times? Did the girls respond to the heart as a visual reminder of the power of words?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: If the large heart is hung in the front of the room, the facilitator can crinkle the heart if they overhear a negative comment.

Lesson: Stress Balloon (adapted from TKF)

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: What causes stress? What are some consequences of stress? How can stress be managed?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants brainstorm healthy ways to deal with and manage stress.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Stress is necessary, often helping us escape danger, perform under pressure, and motivating us to do our best. But too much stress, that feeling of being overloaded with too many things to do and not enough time to do them, can cause us to feel angry or agitated, withdrawn or depressed. Stress is both a mental and physical condition, commonly leading to a headache, heart beating fast, tense muscles, stomachache or indigestion, and sweaty palms. Along with their rapidly changing bodies, minds, and emotions, young people deal with stress due to school, friendships, parents/guardians, siblings, home life,

relationships, money, extracurricular activities, and uncertainty about the future. Noting the range of stressors acting upon them, it is important to teach young people how to manage stress in healthy ways. Teaching stress relief skills can help them avoid conflicts with others, self-harming behaviors, and violence.

#### MATERIALS:

- Balloons, at least one per participant
- “Joleen’s day” story

LENGTH OF LESSON: 25 minutes

#### PROCEDURE:

1. Explain that stress is a normal emotion and is part of being human. Tell participants that we may feel stressed if we are tired, have a test coming up, have a lot of things to do, or if we are having an argument with a friend. Stress can make us feel worried, nervous, angry, sad, or a combination of emotions. Being stressed out can cause us to be unfocused, out of control, or can lead us to make decisions such as giving up, ditching responsibility, or doing something dangerous like taking drugs or acting violent. Tell participants that everyone has different things that make them feel stressed, these are called stressors.
2. Have each participant say one thing that makes them stressed.
3. Explain that many things in life are stressful and that it is OK to be stressed. What matters is how we deal with our stress or anger or frustration.
4. Explain that the balloons represent their hearts and all the pain, hurt, anger, and stress that can be found inside of them. Explain that when we feel stressed our hearts are filling up like this balloon. Demonstrate by blowing into the balloon a little bit.
5. Each added stressor, or thing that stresses us out, is more air into our balloon. Blow into the balloon again.
6. Ask: as things happen to us that are difficult for us or make us feel bad (blow into the balloon a little more), what is happening to the balloon? (it is getting bigger)
7. Ask: what happens when our balloon is full and we try to add more air? (it pops)
8. **Explain that we need to release some stress or anger from our lives so we don’t pop or respond in an unhealthy way. Release air from the balloon.**
9. **Tell students: Listen to the story about Joleen’s day. Joleen’s day is full of stress; however she has found ways to relieve her stress so she does not “pop.” As you listen to the story, blow air into your balloon when Joleen feels stress and release air as Joleen relieves her stress.”**
10. **Hand out a balloon to each student. Read “Joleen’s Day.”**
11. **Ask students to discuss: What kinds of things filled Joleen’s balloon? What did Joleen do to release air out of her a balloon? What else could Joleen could have done to release air out of her balloon? What do you do to release air out of your balloon?**
12. Have students do the balloon activity with their own stress. This can be done one at a time with the whole group, in pairs, or in small groups.
13. Ask students to discuss: What kinds of things did you put inside your balloon? How did it feel to put those in your balloon? How are you affected by the feelings you keep inside? What

kinds of things helped you release your balloon? How did it feel to release your balloon? How can you better take care of yourself so you will have less stress?

14. Explain that sometimes our stress is too difficult to manage by ourselves. Ask: “who can we go to that can help us to relieve our stress? (ex: teacher, counselor, parent). Remind students this should be someone they can trust with their feelings and emotions.

15. Ask the students to give their balloon to someone they can trust, like giving their heart to someone, in exchange for that person being there for them when they need them.

JOURNAL PROMPT: What new way did you learn to relieve stress that you can try? Make a list of 7 positive things you can do to relieve stress next time you feel stressed, angry, or frustrated.

EVALUATION: Were participants able to identify stressors in the story and in their own lives? Were participants able to brainstorm ways to relieve stress in their own lives?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Ask participants to share positive ways they relieved stress over the past week. Ask participants to share a negative way they tried to relieve stress over the past week and what they could have done differently.

### **Stress balloon: “JOLEEN’S DAY”**

Joleen woke up in the morning to her mother yelling at her\* to get out of bed. She was very tired and not ready to get up, so she ignored her and stayed in bed. Her mother came into the room and pulled her covers off. She felt **very angry\***. **When Joleen’s mother left the room, she sat up and took three slow, deep breaths~. The she got** dressed and headed to the kitchen for breakfast. Her little brother was eating the last of her favorite cereal\*. She saw a box of a new kind of cereal she had never tried. She decided to try it and really liked it~. Now she had a new favorite cereal. After breakfast, Joleen finished getting ready for school and started to walk to school. Her friends had already left and she had to walk with the new girl in school that she did not know very well\*. Then Joleen began to talk to the girl and she was nice~. Joleen got to school early so she got to play before school~. But then a mean boy came up to Joleen and began to tease her and laugh at her\*. Once again, Joleen took three deep breaths~. She then asked the boy to leave her alone, but the boy would not \*. So Joleen walked away and found some other kids to play with~. Then the bell rang and school started. In class, Joleen realized she forgot to do her homework\*. She had to stay in at recess to finish her work\*. Then the teacher gave her a snack for being good and finishing everything~. **After school, Joleen’s mom was late to pick her up\*. Then when they got home she had lots** of chores to do before she was allowed to play\*. Then her mom was yelling at her because she did not finish her homework from earlier\*. She was feeling frustrated so she went outside when she was allowed and went for a walk around her block~. Once she was calmer, she came in and finished her homework. She felt good that she completed it~. Then Joleen had a very good dinner~. After dinner, she got ready for bed and went to sleep, ready for her next day.

\*Stressful situations (blow air into the balloon)

~Coping skills used/positive things (let air out of the balloon)